

## THE STUDENT PROTECTION ACT

Nationwide, a disturbingly large number of people employed by school systems have abused their positions of trust to engage in sexual misconduct with under-age students. A 2004 report ([www.ed.gov/rschstat/research/pubs/misconductreview/report.pdf](http://www.ed.gov/rschstat/research/pubs/misconductreview/report.pdf)) by the U.S. Department of Education concluded that "nearly 9.6% of students are targets of educator sexual misconduct sometime during their school career".

I am deeply disturbed to learn of the lack of safeguards in place to protect students from the sexual advances of educators. It is abundantly clear that at every level of our current educational structure there are flaws when it comes to reporting, investigating and communicating such occurrences. States currently lack a clear definition of describing what constitutes inappropriate behavior by educators and there is no uniform set of guidelines in place for reporting and investigating such allegations. Even when educators have been found guilty of sexual misconduct, they often retain their teaching certificates and are able to relocate to other school districts.

This is why I introduced H.R. 781, the Student Protection Act, legislation that would develop a national system of oversight for States for sexual misconduct in elementary and secondary school systems, and provide all States with information on educators who have been disciplined in other States.



### Important elements of this legislation include:

- A uniform reporting requirement for educators accused of sexual misconduct.
- The creation of a body within each state to be responsible for receiving and investigating allegations of sexual misconduct by educators.
- Policies for reporting and investigating allegations of sexual misconduct, as well as training for investigators performing investigations.
- Establishment of a toll-free number for reporting allegations of sexual misconduct.
- A nationwide database of educators who have committed acts of sexual misconduct that is made available to the public.

Providing a safe environment for our children to learn in is of paramount importance. The predatory acts of a few bad teachers threatens to cast a shadow over the amazing job that educators do every day in preparing our youth to tackle the challenges and opportunities they will face. It is my hope that by implementing a national system of standards for oversight, reporting and investigation of sexual misconduct by educators – and by bringing transparency to the system – we can better ensure the safety of our children.

### What they're saying about the Student Protection Act...

#### Florida Gov. Charlie Crist:

"Well crafted legislation... an important step towards protecting Florida's children and children across our great nation from predators and in ensuring a safe and secure learning environment."

#### National Center for Missing and Exploited Children:

"Brings long overdue recognition to the problem of child sexual exploitation in the school system.... Enable the school districts to more effectively investigate allegations of sexual misconduct and will also help reduce incidences of child sexual exploitation in schools by repeat offenders."

#### The Florida Legislature passed a resolution April 29, 2008, calling on Congress to:

"Support the passage of laws establishing ethical standards for professional educators and to support a national clearinghouse to provide for the reporting of data concerning educator misconduct. A national database is necessary to promote the timely sharing of critical information among states and to provide for the safety and welfare of students."